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LETTER INTRODUCTION

IT was very well said by Aristotle, "It is all external, and depends on Chance and Fortune from the internal Constitution, as Chance does to the external, and Fortune does to the internal, and keeping close the heart that is in confusion."

HAPPINESS.

What he feels in himself, and observes in others, that without a Disposition for Happiness, the Blessings of Life are bestowed upon him in vain, and that with it, even a bare Possession of Poverty and Pain is almost Happiness enough.

I am led to this by the following Letter, which I received from a very valuable Friend, who will perceive that it was not without a Disposition of Happiness, that he presents to the Public a Picture of domestic Happiness, and how an elegant little Family may be happily and within bounds upon an Income of only 500 a Year. I shall give it to the Public exactly as I received it. Those who have feeling Hearts will call it an Introduction to the Art of being happy.

D U B L I N.
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INTRODUCTION.

IT was very well said by Montaigne, *That all external Acquisitions receive Taste and Colour from the internal Constitution, as Cloaths give Warmth, not from their own Heat, but by covering and keeping close the Heat that is in ourselves.*

EVERY Man's Experience will prove the Truth of this Observation; as it will teach him, both from what he feels in himself, and observes in others, that without a Disposition for Happiness, the Benefits and Blessings of Life are bestowed upon him in vain; and that with it, even a bare Exemption from Poverty and Pain is almost Happiness enough.

I AM led to this by the following Letter, which I received  years ago from a very valuable Friend. The Reader will perceive that it was not written with a view of Publication; but as it presents us with a very natural Picture of domestic Happiness, and instructs us how an elegant little Family may live charitably and within Bounds upon an Income of only 50*l.* a Year, I shall give it to the Public exactly as I received it. Those who have feeling Hearts will call it an Entertainment; to the rest it is not written.

A LETTER



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LETTER.

York, June the 14th, 1751.

Dear SIR,

THE Reason that you have not heard from me for these last five Weeks, is, that the People, where I have been, have engrossed all my Time and Attention. Perhaps, you will be surprized to hear that I have lived a complete Month with our old Friend, the Rector of *South-Green* and his honest Wife.

You know with what Compassion we used to think of them: That a Man, who had mixed a good deal with the World, and who had always entertained Hopes of making a Figure in it, should foolishly, and at an Age when People generally grow wise, throw away his Affections upon a Girl worth nothing; and that ~~she~~, one of the liveliest of Women, as well as the finest, should refuse the many advantageous Offers which were made her, and follow a poor Parson to his Living of 50 *l.* a Year, in a remote Corner of the Kingdom. But I have learned from Experience, that we have been pitying the happiest Couple of our Acquaintance. I am impatient to tell you all I knew of them.

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THE Parish of *South-Green* is about seventeen Miles from this Place, and is, in my Opinion, the most pleasing Spot of Ground in all *Yorkshire*.— I should have first told you, that our Friend, by the Death of a Relation, was enabled to carry his Wife from *London*, with a neat two hundred and fifty Guineas in his Pocket; with which Sum he has converted the old Parsonage House into a little Palace, and fourteen Acres of Glebe into a Farm and Garden, that even a *Pelham*, or a *Southcote*, might look upon with Pleasure.

THE House stands upon an Eminence within the bending of a River, with about half an Acre of Kitchen-Garden, fenced with a good old Wall, well planted with Fruit Trees. The River that almost surrounds this little Spot affords them Fish at all Seasons. They catch Trout there, and Plenty of them, from two to five Pounds Weight. Before the House is a little Lawn, with Trees planted with Clumps; and behind it a Yard, well stocked with Poultry, with a Barn, Cow-House and Dairy. At the End of the Garden, a Draw-Bridge leads you to a small Piece of Ground, where three or four Pigs are kept. Here they are fattened for Pork or Bacon; the latter they cure themselves, and in all my Life I never eat better.

IN the seven Years of their Retirement, they have so planted their little Spot, that you can hardly conceive any Thing more beautiful. The Fields lie all together, with Pasture Ground enough for two Horses and as many Cows, and the rest Arable. Every Thing thrives under their Hands. The Hedges, all of their own planting, are the thickest of any in the Country, and within every one of them is a Sand Walk between a double Row of flowering Shrubs, hardly ever out of Blossom.
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The Produce of these Fields supplies them abundantly with the Means of Bread and Beer, and with a Surplus yearly for the Poor, to whom they are the best Benefactors of any in the Neighbourhood. The Husband brews, and the Wife bakes; he manages the Farm, and she the Dairy; and both with such Skill and Industry that you would think them educated to nothing else.

THEIR House consists of two Parlours and a Kitchen below, and two Bed-Chambers and a Servant's Room above. Their Maid is a poor Woman's Daughter in the Parish, whom they took at eleven Years old, and have made the handiest Girl imaginable. She is extremely pretty, and might marry herself to Advantage, but she so loves her Mistress, that no Temptation is strong enough to prevail upon her to leave her.

In this sweet Retirement they have a Boy and a Girl; the Boy six Years old, and the Girl four, both of them the prettiest little Things that ever were born. The Girl is the very Picture of her Mother, with the same Softness of Heart and Temper. The Boy is a jolly Dog, and loves Mischief; but if you tell him an interesting Story, he will cry for an Hour together. The Husband and Wife constantly go to Bed at ten, and rise at six. The Business of the Day is commonly finished by Dinner-Time; and all after it is Amusement and Pleasure, without any set Forms. They are almost worshipped by the Parishioners, to whom the Doctor is not only the spiritual Director, but the Physician, the Surgeon, the Apothecary, the Lawyer, the Steward, the Friend, and the cheerful Companion. The best People in the Country are fond of visiting them. They call it going to see the Wonders of *Yorkshire*, and say, that they never eat so heartily as of the Parson's Bacon and Greens.

I TOLD

I told you at the Beginning of this Letter that they were the happiest Couple of our Acquaintance; and now I will tell why they are so. In the first Place, they love and are delighted with each other. A seven Year's Marriage, instead of lessening their Affections, has increased them. They wish for nothing more than what their little Income affords them; and even of that little they lay up. Our Friend shewed me his Account of Expences, or rather his Wife's Account; by which it appears, that they have saved yearly from fifteen Shillings to a Guinea, exclusive of about the same Sum, which they distribute among the Poor, besides Barley, Wheat, and twenty other Things. Their only Article of Luxury is Tea; but the Doctor says, he would forbid that, if his Wife could forget her *London* Education. However, they seldom offer it but to the best Company, and less than a Pound will last them a Twelvemonth. Wine they have none, nor will they receive it as a Present. Their constant Drink is small Beer and Ale, both of which they brew in the highest Perfection. Exercise and Temperance keep them in perpetual Health and Good-Humour. All the Strife between them is, who shall please and oblige most. Their favourite Amusement is Reading: Now and then, indeed, our Friend scribbles a little; but his Performances reach no farther than a short Sermon, or a Paper of Verses in Praise of his Wife. Every Birth-Day of the Lady is constantly celebrated in this Manner; and though you do not read a *Swift* to his *Stella*, yet there is something so sincere and tender in these little Pieces, that I could never read any of them without Tears. In the fine Afternoons and Evenings they are visiting in their Chariot. — Don't be surprized: The Doctor keeps his Chariot I assure you: It was given him by an honest Baronet in the Neighbourhood,

Neighbourhood, and is drawn by his Plough Horses, and driven by his Plough Boy. When they have no Engagements abroad, they are walking Arm in Arm, with their Boy and Girl, about their Grounds; but how cheerful and how happy! is not to be told you. Their Children are hardly so much Children as themselves. But though they love one another even to Dotage, their Fondness never appears before Company. I never saw either of them so much as playing with the other's Hand. I mean only when they have known I was within Sight of them: I have stolen upon them unawares, indeed, and have been a Witness to such Words and Looks as have quite melted me.

WITH this Couple, and in this Retirement, I have passed my Time since you heard from me. How happily I need not say: Come and be a Judge yourself; they invite you most heartily.

ONE Thing I had forgot to tell you of them. It makes no Part of their Happiness that they can compare themselves with the rest of the World, who want Minds to enjoy themselves as they do. It rather lessens than increases it. Their own Happiness is from their own Hearts. They have every Thing they wish for in this 50 *l.* a Year, and one another. They make no Boast of themselves, nor find Fault with any Body. They are sorry I am not as happy as they; but are far from advising me to retire as they have done. I left a Bank Note of 20 *l.* behind me in my Room, enclosed in a Letter of Thanks for their Civilities to me; but it was returned me this Morning to *York*, in a Manner that pleased me more than all the rest of their Behaviour. Our Friend thanked me for the Favour I intended him; but told me I could bestow it better among the Poor. That his Wife and he had been looking over the Family Accounts of last Month, and that they

they found me only a few Shillings in their Debt. That if I did not think they were a thousand Times overpaid by the Pleasure I had given them, they would be obliged to me for a Pound of Tea, and a little of *Hardham's* Snuff, when I got to *London*.

I HOPE soon to see you, and to entertain you by the Week, with the Particulars of the Parson and his Wife. 'Till then,

I am, &c.

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With this Compliment, and in this Retirement, I have passed my Time since you heard from me. How happily I need not say: Come and be a Judge yourself, they may say heartily.

One Thing I have forgot to tell you of them. It makes no Part of the Business that they can compare themselves with the rest of the World, who want Minds to enjoy themselves as they do. It rather lessens than increases it. Their own Happiness is from their own Hearts. They have every Thing they will for in this 50th Year, and one another. They make no Boast of themselves, nor find Fault with any Body. They are sorry I am not as happy as they; but are far from advising me to retire as they have done. I let a Basket of 20th behind me in my Room, enclosed in a Letter of Thanks for their Civilities to me; but it was returned me this Morning to York, in a Manner that pleased me more than all the rest of their Behaviour. Our Friend thanked me for the Favour I intended him; but told me I could bestow it better among the poor. That his Wife and he had been looking over the Family Accounts of last Month, and that they

